Home Smoke Detectors

A smoke detector or smoke alarm is a device that detects smoke and issues an alarm to alert nearby people that there is a potential fire. Each residence should have a minimum of one detector on each habitable level. This includes having one in your basement, located at the bottom of the stairs, and in an attic that is tall enough to allow access. To increase the chances of waking sleeping occupants most homes should have at least one smoke detector near any bedroom, ideally in a hallway as well as in the bedroom itself. It is recommended that smoke detectors not be placed directly in the kitchen because small amounts of smoke and particles generated while cooking can set them off. Instead, place them just outside the kitchen. You should also not place one in a bathroom or right outside the door of a bathroom. Moisture can cause false alarms or damage the detector.

Smoke detectors should be mounted on the ceiling or at the top of a wall, several inches from the top but no more than a foot.

Common types of smoke detectors are battery operated. New construction homes may have hard-wired smoke detectors with a battery back up. Smoke detectors sold today are designed to provide a visual indication of a missing battery. One popular brand will not allow the user to close the battery door until a battery has been placed in the alarm. Remember to replace your batteries at least once a year. An easy way to remember is during daylight savings time in the spring.

Testing your smoke detector should be done once a month. An easy way to remember to test your detector is on the first day or the last day of the month. To test your smoke detector you can either push the test button or blow out a match or candle and wave near the smoke detector. It is recommended that you replace your smoke detectors every ten years so make sure you write the date you purchased your detector on the inside cover.

If you have any questions regarding smoke detectors, please call Neenah-Menasha Fire Rescue at 886-6200.